

THE CANDID EXAMINER.

"EXAMINE YOURSELVES, WHETHER YE BE IN THE FAITH? PROVE YOUR OWN SELVES."—Paul.

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Examination of Rev. E. W. GOODMAN'S
Serman, preached at Mount Pleasant.

(Continued from page 116.)

Mr. Goodman advances to his second position, and says,

"In the second place, I shall show you that eternal punishment is not inconsistent with the goodness of God."

This is a very singular position indeed ; yet it is not more singular than the method pursued to establish it. After showing, that "goodness and justice" harmonize with each other, he advances the following.

"But if holiness has been shewn to require the eternal punishment of sin, surely it is clear, that justice requires it, &c. Therefore while justice and goodness have just been shewn to harmonize with each other, and justice and holiness to require the eternal punishment of sin, certainly goodness requires it also ; else the attributes of God are divided against themselves."

The reader must plainly understand the nature of Mr. G's argument. The reason he alleges why justice requires endless punishment, is, because holiness requires it ; and the reason why goodness requires endless punishment, is because holiness and justice require it. You will remember that the great and only argument alleged in proof that holiness requires endless punishment, was predicated on the position, that "sin must be as infinite as the holiness itself," or in other words, that the nature of sin is as extensive as the holiness against

which it is committed." Now as this has been proved to be false, and perfectly inconsistent with scripture, the first link of his chain is broken, and of course the other links suspended to it, are also consequently broken with the same touch of truth,

"Tenth or ten thousandth breaks the chain alike."

The reader doubtless perceives the sandy foundation upon which Mr. G. has erected his tottering fabric ; yet we will patiently attend to the sum of his arguments. They are seen in the following extract.

"We love to see innocence protected, tho' it may be at the expense of the happiness of that fellow creature, who committed the crime. We love the motive that impels to the act of protecting the innocent, and we involuntarily say, that was a good act ; or in other words, such an act indicates goodness of heart."

If therefore, we can see a fitness and propriety in these attributes, as they so faintly appear in the lives and actions of men, shall we be blind to their excellence, when they appear in the government of God ? If a principle of goodness be implanted in the heart of any one in this world of unfriendliness, to such a principle, ought not that principle to be protected from the assaults of those enemies, who would gladly destroy it ? It certainly had ; and we do not stop to inquire, by what means that principle was implanted in the heart. If we have any regard to that which is good and virtuous, we are ready to defend it, and to condemn the conduct of those who do not the same. The principle that leads to actions of this kind whether it proceeds from sanctified nature, or the faint resemblance that remained in our first parents after the fall, to what they were in their primitive state, we do not hesitate according to the common acceptation of the word, to pronounce a good principle. Finding then in man, as we certainly do, a propensity to promote his

own and the general good, what is the fair induction concerning the infinite source of all that is *holy, just and good*? It is that he must and will protect, from the assaults of sin, all that is in its *nature truly good*; and that he does overrule both good and evil, in such a manner, as shall ultimately result in the greatest good."

If the reader will carefully examine the above extract, he will discover that it establishes exactly the reverse of what it was designed to establish. It establishes beyond contradiction the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness. Mr. G. has clearly shown that "the fair induction concerning the infinite source of all that is holy just and good," "is that he must and will protect from the assaults of sin, all that is in its *nature truly good*." Therefore if there be in man any thing that is *truly good*, that will be saved from the assaults of sin. Now, unless Mr. G. can prove, contrary from his previous concessions, that there is not in mankind any thing which is "good and virtuous," then his own argument proves universal salvation; for all that "is good and virtuous"—all that is "*truly good*," God must and will protect from the assaults of sin." Should Mr. G. be found to support that all men are naturally, wholly and totally depraved and destitute of any thing which is good and virtuous, of any thing which in its nature is truly good, it would follow according to the strict propriety of his argument, that not any one of all men will be saved from sin, or finally protected from the assaults of sin. For if God "must and will protect, from the assaults of sin, all that is in its *nature truly good*," then to reverse it, he will not protect from the assaults of sin, any thing which is not in its na-

ture *truly good*. Therefore, if mankind are naturally, wholly and totally depraved, destitute of any thing "*truly good*," not any of them will be saved from sin, or finally protected from the assaults of sin. But that Mr. G. has not involved himself in the opinion which on his own ground would lead to universal and endless damnation, is plain from the following statements in the above extract, teaching that there is something in mankind truly good. Referring to the attributes of Deity, he distinctly supports, that "these attributes" "faintly appear in the lives and actions of men." Now, these attributes could not *faintly appear*, if they did not in some degree actually exist. That the reader may not be mistaken by supposing that Mr. G. designed to imply that these attributes or "principles of goodness implanted in the heart," do not "appear in the lives and actions of men," in their natural state, but are confined to the regenerate, and *proceed only from sanctified nature*, we point him to the following, "The principle that leads to actions of this kind, whether it proceeds from sanctified nature, or the faint resemblance that remained in our first parents after the fall, to what they were in their primitive state, we do not hesitate, according to the common acceptance of the word, to pronounce a good principle." Thus the *principle that leads to actions of goodness*, "proceeds from the faint resemblance that remained in our first parents after the fall; and this principle Mr. G. does not hesitate to pronounce a good princi-

ple. The amount of Mr. G's argument is, that there is in mankind that which is worthy of being saved, or protected from the assaults of sin, and that God must and will accomplish this great and benevolent object. This is perfectly consistent with scripture, "God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved." The world embraces all for whom the saviour died, and Paul said, that "he tasted death for every man." According to Mr. G's reasoning, which we think is good reasoning, God does not save what is not in *its nature truly good*, but "protects from the assaults of sin, all that is in its nature truly good;" therefore there must be in the world or in every man something good, or christ would not have been sent to save the world and to taste death for every man. Again, "behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." If there was not in man or the world that which is truly good—if the world was wholly and totally depraved, destitute of any thing which is "good and virtuous," then when the sin of the world is taken away, there will be nothing left. But Jesus came to "save his people from their sins," which clearly teaches that there is something in his people besides sins, which he came to save from sins. But if mankind or his people were nothing but sin, if they did not possess something truly good, when they were saved from sins, what would be left?

Mr. G. concludes the above extract in the most beautiful manner. No universalist could have brought a conclusion more favorable to the doctrine of the final resti-

tution. His conclusion is, that God "does overrule both good and evil, in such a manner, as shall ultimately result in the greatest good." Now which is the *greatest good*, for a part of our fallen race to be endlessly miserable, or for the whole to be saved from sin and rendered holy and happy? The answer of every reasonable man, on this question, is one, which is, that the greatest good which can be thought of, is the universal salvation of mankind. Well God "does overrule both good and evil in such a manner, as shall ultimately result in the greatest good."

After Mr. G. has reasoned so well, his doctrine obliges him to fall off from a course of sound reasoning. And from what he calls

"The fact that the wicked often prosper while the pious are left to pass through the world in conditions of great suffering and abasement," he concludes "either that God is not just and good, or that there will be a future state of existence, consequent upon a day of general judgment, when and where all apparent contradictions in his present mode of government will be properly adjusted." &c.

This objection has been frequently made and as frequently answered. We heartily pray that those who are actuated by the spirit of this objection, and who appear to envy the prosperity of the wicked, and anticipate a time when they shall reign in glory and behold these wicked whose lot they envied in this world in endless pain, might increase in true piety and grow in grace, till they enjoyed that inward peace and happiness of mind which would teach them that the happiness of the pious, tho' they live in temporal abasement, is abund-

antly greater than that of the wicked tho' they roll in prosperity and grandeur. Deceived mortals, so little is their enjoyment of religion, that they envy the condition of the wicked on account of their temporal prosperity, and think "that God is not *just and good*, or there will be a future state of existence" where they will be rewarded for enduring the miseries of a religious life, and the wicked punished for the happiness they enjoyed in sin. These are the ideas which Mr. G. carries in this part of his argument, and to put the subject to rest, he brings forth the following pure complaint of the pharisee.

"Shall those who have blasphemed his name and trampled upon his word and ordinances, and persecuted the pious thro' all their lives, at last stand upon an equal footing with those who have peaceably and humbly walked through life, maintaining the honor of his name, his word and his ordinances, and willingly submitting themselves to the reproach, the shame and disgrace of the world, that by so doing they might glorify God, and finally receive the crown of eternal life? Is this consistent with the goodness of God?"

This is no new complaint. It as old as the first pharisee that ever existed, and is a twin sister to the saying, "*stand thou by for I am holier than thou*. This murmuring at the great, impartial and unmerited goodness of God for graciously pardoning the chief of sinners, and finally, through grace, placing them "upon an equal footing" with those others who have borne the burden and heat of the day, is of a piece with that parisaical murmuring which our Saviour reproved in his parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Because the last received as much as the first—because they

"received every man a penny," "they murmured against the good man of the house, saying,—thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day." Had those who had borne the heat and burden of the day, most earnestly prayed to the good man of the house, during their toil, that those idlers in the market place, might receive the same good which they expected, and then complained because their prayers were answered they would have betrayed the most profound hypocrisy. But this addition to inconsistency, was left to be added by modern pharisees. Is it not a fact that those who murmur at the doctrine which teaches that eternal life shall finally be given to all, pray and to appearance devoutly for the salvation of those desperately wicked, and then complain bitterly at the idea that they will finally obtain this salvation and "stand upon an equal footing" with themselves? This conduct puts on a complete finish to the character of the perfect pharisee.

(To be continued.)

BY E. FERRISS.

An inquiry into the meaning of St. Peter 1st epistle, chap. iv. verse 6.

"For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

In examining this passage which I believe to be written under divine influence, I shall be very precise, in attending to every part of it; and also to the relation it bears to what had been before said by the holy apostle, both in this and the preceding chapter. For the nature of the subject should, in a great measure, determine the meaning of any author's words, found in a

particular sentence. And, 1st. I would observe, that St. Peter had been speaking of what the followers of Christ, have to suffer from the hand of persecuting men: and after exhorting them to submission, he refers to what Christ, the captain of our salvation, had suffered for sin, and to the efficacy of his suffering, in the following words. "For Christ hath also, once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but quickened by the spirit. By which also, he went and preached to the spirits in prison; which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water." As much as though the apostle had said. "My brethren, Christ hath suffered, to bring us to God, who live in this age of the world, and not only so; but also as he was quickened by the spirit, the merits of his sufferings extends to those who died in disobedience, (by the flood in the days of Noah;) therefore he went by the power of his quickening spirit, and preached the gospel to the unhappy spirits in prison; "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." This is briefly the sense of the Apostle's subject, in what I have adduced. However as I am aware that many differ from me in their views on this subject, of Christ going and preaching to the antediluvians, I shall beg leave to labor this point, very minutely. Some say, "As Noah was a preacher of righteousness, the apostle's meaning was, that Christ by the spirit, preached to the inhabitants of the old world by Noah." But I will presume to say that it never can be proved that Noah, although a preacher of righteousness, was in that a preacher of the gospel. That he preached a law righteousness, I will not pretend to dispute; and that by warning the people of that age, against their wicked progress; and perhaps foretold them of the deluge; that God was about to drown that wicked world, &c. which was true enough; therefore a righteous testimony. But was that preaching the gospel? No for the gospel is glad tidings of good things. But can we suppose that a revelation to a man, that he was very wicked, and conse-

quently God would drown him, together with all the rest of the wicked world, was glad tidings of good things? No, but notwithstanding true, must have been very heavy heart-aching news; therefore nothing like the good tidings of a saviour. I would also observe, that in the days of Noah, God called the people flesh.—Gen. 6. 3. "And the Lord, said, my spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh." But when Christ went and preached to them by the quickening spirit, the inspired apostle informs us, they were spirits in prison, who had been disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. We also learn, from St. Peter's account of that people, that the long suffering of God waited upon them all that time. Yes, truly we may conclude, that God suffered them not only to know that their vile conduct was offensive in the sight of heaven, but he also suffered them to be informed of a coming judgment, upon them for their great wickedness: And yet they repented not, but remained disobedient unto death, notwithstanding all that God for so long a time beforehand suffered them to know; which is properly called the long suffering of God, which waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing. St. Peter then goes on to speak particularly of the condition of his temporary brethren in the faith, comparing their then present situation, with that of the few souls preserved in the ark. He next calls up their attention, to a view of the different state and condition of those who were disobedient unbelievers in that day of the apostles:—Seemingly with a view to compare their situation to that before mentioned of the disobedient Antediluvians of Noah's day. He then goes on to inform his brethren, that those wicked people of their day, must yet give an account to him who preached to the spirits in prison. In the following manner chap. 4, 5, 6. "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you. Who shall give an account to him who is ready to judge the quick and the dead."—And then in the 6th verse, he refers to what he had before said, of Christ's going and preaching to the spirits in prison. "For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judg-

ed according to men in the flesh, but live, according to God in the spirit."

In those three verses, the inspired apostle, first names the radical cause why Christ preached; second, what he preached; third, to whom he preached; fourthly, and lastly; for what purpose or design he preached to those spirits. First, The cause he makes to be twofold, i. e. First, Christ's being the real judge of both the quick and dead, or in other words (the living and the dead) Second, his being ready to execute his office: Which readiness pre-supposed him to be duly prepared for the work allotted him by infinite wisdom. For this cause, he preached to the spirits in prison, as this work belonged to his divine mission, as well as to preach to the living, (or the quick.) Second, we are informed, that he preached the gospel to them that are dead. But what is the gospel? St. Paul says, "It is the power of God unto salvation;" Then the power of God, unto the salvation of the spirits in prison, was preached to them, by the quickening spirit of Christ. "By which also, he went and preached to the spirits in prison." Again, St. Paul informs us, that they who preach the gospel in so doing, "Publish glad tidings of good things." So that Christ in preaching the gospel to them that are dead, must have made known joyful tidings to the unhappy spirits in prison. But who were those spirits in prison? Ans. St. Peter informs us, that they were those who were disobedient in the days of Noah.— And that the gospel was preached to them that were dead. Fourth and lastly, he lets us know the purpose and glorious design, God had in view, in Christ's preaching the gospel to them, i. e. "That they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." Such was the purpose of him who says, "My purpose shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.

But what is meant by their being judged according to men in the flesh? Answer, as they had been men in the flesh, living in all manner of wickedness, even so after death, being spirits in prison, they must first be judged according to what kind of men they had been in the flesh, in order to save them from all their former sins in the flesh, i. e. they must see the whole nature

of sin condemned, before they could suitably appreciate the worth of eternal salvation, so as to live according to God in the spirit. So that in that judgment, those spirits received a condemning knowledge of their sins, according to their deeds committed in the body or flesh. Therefore, were first judged according to men in the flesh. Then, what is meant by living according to God in the spirit? Ans. to live godly in Christ Jesus, is living according to God. And to live so in the spirit, implies they were not men in the flesh, but in the spirit, as God is a spirit; in which holy nature he lives, even so, they also being made holy spirits, lived according to God in the spirit. But first those spirits, in prison had to be judged according to what kind of men they had been while in the flesh; by which undoubtedly, they were lead to loathe, abhor and condemn sin, and to love holiness.

Ques. What kind of a prison were those spirits in; before they were liberated?— Was it like a located, dark dungeon, a particular place of confinement?

Ans. I do not think it is so to be understood; but it refers to the state of mind they were in; contracted, and shut up in their understanding, they were confined as to a knowledge of God and his righteousness. A veil of spiritual darkness, interrupted their understanding, until Christ brought life and immortality to their understanding through the gospel, he preached to them.

Ques. What time after the flood was the gospel preached to the spirits in prison, which had been disobedient while the ark was preparing?

Ans. It is impossible for us at present, to precisely know. Some think it must be during the three days, the body of Christ lay in the tomb. But for my own part, I do not think this view of the subject, to be altogether certain. For we must acknowledge, that the same spirit operated before Christ was crucified, that has since that event; by which many were converted through the merits of him who was to come and die for sin. Therefore, I conceive that the merits of Christ's sufferings for sin, might, through the eternal spirit, reach the case of those spirits in prison, as well before his death, as after.

However, leaving this particular, let us hear what some perhaps, notwithstanding all I have said, will still urge against my views, as already brought forward in this work. And if it is still contended, that St. Peter's meaning of Christ's going and preaching to the spirits in prison, was that Christ went by the spirit in Noah. and preached before the flood to men imprisoned in the flesh. Then suffer me to throw my arguments more into a syllagistical form, for the sake of further light. Now, for the gospel to be preached by Christ, to any people, presupposes salvation possible for some of that people, at least through preaching. Therefore Christ did not, by the spirit in Noah, nor in any of his family, preach the gospel to those who were drowned in the flood, for all remained in disobedience unto death. I will prove this proposition further. The gospel was preached to the spirits in prison, with a design, that they should live according to God in the spirit, as has been proved. But those antediluvians died in disobedience, therefore, did not so live; hence, since no purpose of infinite wisdom ever fails, Christ did not preach to them before, but after the flood; for if he had, they would have lived before the flood. Again, our Lord says, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." But if the holy Father sent his son to preach by the spirit in Noah to the inhabitants of the old world, for the express purpose that they should live, and yet notwithstanding, they did not live then Christ in that instance, at least, failed, for it would appear that he neither did according to the purpose of the Father's will, nor finished his work. But we read, "he shall not fail," and again "the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands. Hence we may infer that the apostle did not mean to be understood, that Christ went before the flood, and preached by the spirit in Noah. No for he says nothing about Noah's preaching.

If any should be so inconsistent, as to contend, that some were saved from sin, while drowning, as being awakened to conviction by the flood of waters, I would reply, St. Peter informs us that only eight souls were saved by water, and these we learn all survived the flood, and no more. But if as some suppose, all men get rid of

sin in death, why then it would seem, that all were saved from their sins by water, contrary to Peter's testimony.

However, as has been proved, Christ has been and preached the gospel to the spirits of those, which had been drowned in their sins in the days of Noah; and as the design of him who never fails, was that those, thus taught by his preaching should be both judged, and then live according to God in the spirit, we must infer that those spirits in prison, have already gone to judgment, and are now living according to God in the spirit, which supposes a state of holy and happy liberty in the spirit of gospel grace.

Ques. Can we suppose those spirits realized faith and repentance in being judged according to men in the flesh, or were they saved without those means?

Ans. Faith and repentance according to St. Paul's writings, are both gifts of God; and agreeable to the whole tenor of the New Testament, are both conveyed to every recipient of those gifts, through the preaching of the gospel. Therefore as certainly as Christ preached the gospel to those spirits, the gifts of faith and repentance attend his quickening word of divine power, especially as we have already proved by St. Peter's testimony, that Christ, who never was to fail, preached the gospel to the spirits in prison, with a positive design, that they should first be judged according to men in the flesh, and next live according to God in the spirit.

St. Peter has made a very obvious distinction between the time, together with the circumstances attending when those spirits were in the flesh, and the after time when Christ preached the gospel to them.

Then the long suffering of God waited upon them. But in the latter case, Jesus Christ by the quickening spirit waited upon them.

In the former time an ark was preparing to save others, while God was designing to destroy the disobedient by a flood of waters. But in the latter time, Christ was preaching the gospel to those who had been disobedient unto death, and God was now designing to save them by that gospel, "Which is the power of God unto salvation."

Again, in the former time, God for a long season suffered them to know by Noah's building the ark, and perhaps other ways, also, that a heavy judgment hung over them, and would at length discharge all its liquid fury upon that ungodly race. But in their latter estate, God suffered the spirits, of the same people, to know the way of salvation through the gospel by the word of Jesus Christ our Lord, (the blessed saviour of all men.) Therefore St. Peter says, when speaking on this subject, "Christ also hath suffered once for sins, &c. but quickened by the spirit. By which also he went & preached unto the spirits in prison. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing" &c. "For, for this cause, was the gospel preached also to them that are dead." (As well as to the living is here implied) that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit." "For to this end Christ died, rose and revived, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living." Acts 5. 30, 31. "The God of our father raised up Jesus to be a Prince and a saviour, to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins." chap. 11. 18. Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." 1 Cor. 15. 19 "If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men the most miserable."

I think I am abundantly able, whenever called upon for such purpose, to prove, that these passages in the order they are quoted, are honestly arranged, and do positively apply to our subject, and do mean what their present arrangement, in this place seems to import. However I must hasten to a close for the present by observing as follows. I have in the whole of this work studied brevity and plainness of speech, more than a flowery elegance of style. My main object is to have St. Peter's testimony rightly understood by the candid reader. I have not sought my own honor among men: had this been my object, I should have chosen a more popular subject. But the advancement of the cause of truth being all my aim in this work, I have made use of what, I conceived to be the best method for that purpose.

INFANCY AND MATURE AGE.

By the Rev. C. Crabbe.

'Twas eight o'clock, and near the fire
My ruddy little boy was seated
And with the title of a sire
My ears expected to be greeted—
But vain the thought!—By sleep oppress'd,
No father there the child descri'd;
His head reclined upon his breast,
Or nodding, roll'd from side to side:—
"Let this young rogue be sent to bed"—
More I had not time to say,
When the poor urchin rais'd his head
To beg that he might longer stay.
Refus'd; towards rest his steps he bent
With tearful eye and aching heart:
But claim'd his playthings ere he went,
And took up stairs his horse and cart.
For new delay, though oft deny'd,
He pleaded;—wildly crav'd the boon:
Though past his usual hour, he cried
At being sent away so soon:
If stern to him, his grief I shar'd,
(Unmov'd who hears his offspring weep?)
Of soothing him I half despair'd:
When all his cares are lost in sleep,
"Alas! poor infant!" I exclaim'd,
"Thy father blushes now to scan,
In all which he so lately blam'd
The follies and the fears of man.
The vain regret the anguish brief,
Which thou hast known, sent up to bed,
Pourtrays of man the idle grief,
When doom'd to slumber with the dead.
And more I thought—when up the stairs
With 'longing, lingering looks' he crept,
To mark of man, the childish cares,
His playthings he carefully kept.
Thus mortals on life's later stage,
When nature claims their forfeit breath—
Still grasp at wealth, in pain and age,
And cling to golden toys in death.
'Tis morn! and see—my smiling boy
Awake to hail returning light;
To fearless laughter! boundless joy!
Forgot the tears of yesternight!
Thus, shall not man forget his woe?
Survive of age and death the gloom!
Smile at the cares he knew below?
And renovated burst the tomb?
O, my creator! when thy will
Shall stretch this frame on earth's cold bed,
Let that blest hope sustain me still,
Till thought, sense mem'ry—all are fled.
And grateful for what thou may'st give,
No tear shall dim my fading eye,
That 'twas thy pleasure I should live—
That 'tis thy mandate bids me die.